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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

—The President has directed Maj. George M. Sternburg, Surgeon U. S. A., to proceed to Decatur, Ala., and to such other points as he may deem necessary to continue his scientific investigations of the yellow fever.

—Among the works announced for immediate publication are: "Essays," by Prof. Huxley; "Wild Beasts and their Ways," by Sir Samuel Baker; "On Truth—a Fundamental Inquiry touching upon Various Popular and Scientific Beliefs," by Prof. St. George Mivart; "Mental Evolution in Man," by Dr. George J. Romanes; "Nature and Man," by the late W. B. Carpenter; "A Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition," by Rev. W. F. Ainsworth.

PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON.—*October 20th.*—The following communications were read; Mr. L. O. Howard, "An Apparatus for the Study of Underground Insects and Plant-Roots;" Professor Lester F. Ward, "The King Devil;" Mr. J. B. Smith, "Some Remarks on Sexual Characters in *Lachnosterna*;" Dr. Theo. Gill, "The Families of Fishes."

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF GEOLOGISTS.—This body met in London on Monday, September 17th, and closed its sessions Saturday, September 22d. After its close, five excursions occupied several days.

September 17th, Monday evening.—Address by Professor Prestwich, followed by reception by Professor and Mrs. Prestwich.

September 18th, Tuesday morning.—Regular opening. Reports of Committee upon Nomenclature. Discussion of Nomenclature of Cambrian and Silurian systems especially, and as to the value of the proposed *Orthrocene*. (See Prestwich's Address, page 9.)

September 19th, Wednesday morning.—Discussion of Crystalline Schists. Afternoon, reception by Professor Flower in Natural History Museum. Evening, reception by Director Geikie in School of Mines, Jermyn Street.

September 20th, Thursday.—Discussion of the Nomenclature on

the Geological Map of Europe. In the afternoon, excursions to Windsor and to Eton, by invitation of the Professors of Eton College; to Kew, and to Erith, Crayford, etc.

September 21st, Friday.—In the afternoon, reception at the rooms of the Geological Society, Burlington House, by the President, Dr. W. T. Blanford.

The results of the congress are thus summed up by the President, Professor Prestwich:—

He said: We approach the end of the congress, and we can now congratulate ourselves upon the results obtained. The first sitting was devoted to the discussion on the divisions of the Cambrian and Silurian systems, and although no vote has been taken, the opinions expressed have demonstrated that all are in accord for retaining the three groups or zones of Barrande and Murchison. But the necessity is not seen of making, as some members proposed, the intermediate zone a separate system. Thus the *status quo* of the Upper and Lower Silurian for the beds as far as the Tremadoc, and of the Cambrian for the group below, will not be affected. Two sittings have been devoted to the discussion on the origin of the crystalline schists by hydrothermal chemical action or by movements, for each of which causes powerful arguments have been advanced. The congress had received and printed in advance memoirs by eminent geologists, which will be valuable documents in the solution of this important problem. Another sitting took cognizance of the connection between the Tertiary and the Quaternary, the result of which is that, although opinions are divided, the majority of members approve of retaining the term Quaternary. Although in these cases votes had not been taken, the discussions had a great interest in the demonstration of the ideas which predominated among the most distinguished geologists. According to the resolutions adopted by the Committee on Voting, it will be easier in the future sessions to arrive at more positive conclusions. The reports which the Committee of Nomenclature has received from the national committees, and which are printed, are of great importance, and will serve as bases for a more settled classification. It is to be regretted also that the great palæontological work of all the known fossils is about to be abandoned for the present, by reason of the great expenses which it involves. One of the most important objects of the congress has been brought to a conclusion—the unification of colors and shadings in maps, and the Committee on the Geological Map of Europe announce to us that the publication of this fine map will not be delayed.

Some six hundred members were registered, of whom one hundred and forty-two were from countries other than Great Britain. The Americans present were Messrs. Dall, Fraser, Gilbert, Marsh,

Newberry, Osborn, Walcott, Williams, of Cornell, and Williams, of Johns Hopkins.

Invitations to hold the next meeting were received from Philadelphia, New York, and Washington. Philadelphia was chosen.

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.—*January 20, 1888.*—Prof. Cope presented for publication the following papers:

(1) "Synopsis of the Vertebrate Fauna of the Puerco Epoch of North America."

(2) "Lemurine Reversion in Human Dentition."

(3) "The Shoulder-girdle and Limbs of Eryops."

February 3.—Dr. Horn exhibited seven species of *Pleocoma* from California, of which three were new, and supported the views of the late Dr. Le Conte of the position of this genus, which he insisted was a *Laparostict*, and not a *Pleurostict* *Lamellicorn*.

February 17.—Prof. Cope presented for publication papers upon "The *Dicotylinae* of the John Day Miocene of North America," and upon "The Mechanical Origin of the Dentition of the *Amblypoda*."

March 2.—Prof. T. B. Stowell presented papers on "The Hypoglossal, Accessory and Glosso-pharyngeal Nerves of the Domestic Cat;" and Mr. F. Jordan an article on "The Aboriginal Pottery of the Middle Atlantic States."

March 16.—Dr. Frazer made a communication respecting the geology of the eastern part of Cuba, reporting the probable occurrence of a large part of the Archæan rocks which lie between the Lower Laurentian and the Palæozoic. Miss H. C. de S. Abbott made some remarks upon the occurrence of a "Series of New Crystalline Compounds in Higher Plants."

Mr. H. Phillips, Jr., presented a first contribution to the "Folklore of Philadelphia and its Vicinity;" and Dr. O. Meyer a paper on "The Miocene Invertebrates from Virginia." Mr. Phillips also reported on the "Langue Internationale" of Dr. Samenhof, of Moscow.

April 6.—Mr. Law presented a paper on "Gildas and Early English History," and Prof. E. J. Houston made an oral communication upon "Death by the Electric Current," in which he held that the fatality largely depended upon the part of the body brought in contact with the wires. Prof. Houston also reported favorably upon the Paillard Palladium alloys in watches as a preservative against the effects of magnetism.

April 20.—Prof. Houston presented a paper upon "Some Possible Methods for the Preparation of Gramophone and Telephone Records." Mr. Phillips exhibited a specimen of *Physa* found from the pipes of the drinking supply, and this was followed by a discussion of the water-supply of cities.

May 4.—The Magellanic medal was presented to Prof. L. M.

Haupt for his paper upon "The Physical Phenomena of Harbor Entrances."

The following papers were presented: "On the Classification and Nomenclature of the Metalline Minerals," by Dr. T. Sterry Hunt; "On the Ear-bones of the Permian Batrachia," by Prof. E. D. Cope; and on "Two New Species of Ophidia from Mexico," by Dr. A. Dugés.

September 7.—The following papers were presented:

"Ibrahim Nukim, ein Guslarenlied der Herzegovina," by Dr. E. S. Krauss (Vienna); "Action of the Gas from As_2O and HNO upon m-Oxybenzoic Acid," by Prof. E. A. Smith; on the "Cretaceous and Tertiary of the Sergipe Alagias Basin of Brazil," by Prof. J. C. Branner.

September 21.—Dr. H. A. Hare presented for the Transactions a paper on the "Diseases of the Mediastinum."

October 5.—Dr. D. G. Brinton read a paper on the "Language of Palæolithic Man."